



ARKANSAS

Arkansas Department of Education
Four Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 682-4475
Website: www.arkansased.org/

Program Overview

The Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP) is a comprehensive education program that focuses on academic standards, professional development, student assessment, and school accountability. ACTAAP includes two separate initiatives: the Smart Start Initiative for students in Grades K–4 and the Smart Step Initiative for students in Grades 5–8. As part of the legislation, the state provides cash rewards for school performance that must be used “to enhance the capability of the school to better serve its students.” School staff votes on how to spend the award funding. During the 2001–02 school year, school awards ranged from about \$600 to \$9,700, and 138 schools earned an award.

In August 2005, the Arkansas Department of Education established performance levels for each of the criterion-referenced tests that are administered to students as a component of ACTAAP. These performance levels have corresponding numerical benchmarks for each grade (K-8) to determine each student's achievement on the criterion-referenced test. The department also established performance levels for students with disabilities.

Awards for ACTAAP are based on the school accountability component of the program. Although ACTAAP allows districts to determine certain components of their programs, it also requires that districts incorporate particular elements as part of the program's eligibility criteria. The accountability elements are divided into three tiers:

- Tier 1: Identifies indicators that all schools must concentrate on and report on to the public. All indicators must be research-based and link to increased student achievement.
- Tier 2: Schools have the option to identify any indicators that are unique to its school. All indicators must be research-based and link to increased student achievement.
- Tier 3: Each school must report annually on the progress of its program to the public.

Performance-based compensation awards are distributed to schools that are able to meet their performance goals and to those showing student achievement gains. Schools that do not meet their performance goals are identified as in need of state support. Continued failure to meet performance goals will result in the school being designated as academically distressed in planning, organization and school improvement.



Program Information

- [ACTAAP Program Information](#)
- [Arkansas Smart Start Initiative](#) and [Arkansas Smart Step Initiative](#)
- [ACTAAP Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Select Articles and Reports

- Arkansas Department of Education. (August 8, 2005). [Emergency Amendment to Rules Governing the ACTAAP and the Academic Distress Program](#).
- [Proposed Formula for Reward Distribution and Guidelines for Expenditure Funds](#). April 18, 2002.
- [Rewards Sorted by Local Education Agencies 2002](#).